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ABSTRACT

This manual presents guidance for creating a constructive dialogue between school officials and the surrounding community on the design of community schools that contribute to enhancing educational quality. The benefits of community participation are addressed as are descriptions of the principle parts of the participation process, including strategic planning, goal setting, and long term planning. Finally, the manual presents the Charrette process as a method for generating design ideas. (Contains 11 references.) (GR)

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National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities

A Visioning Process for Designing Responsive Schools

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Introduction

Schools, today, are facing more difficult challenges than ever before. To find answers to meet these challenges will require the involvement of citizens from all parts of the community.

Communities that attempt to involve their citizens in improving education, however, face many obstacles. Some people who want to be involved in schools do not know where to begin. Others feel too overwhelmed or unprepared. Some feel disconnected because they do not have children in school. At the same time, some educators fear that if they expand public involvement, parents and others might make demands of the schools without considering what they can do to help.

Small group discussions provide a practical way to overcome these obstacles. They create a genuine, productive dialogue that allows people to consider many different viewpoints. Coming together in small groups allows people to get past political disputes and enables them to thoroughly examine the issues, develop new ideas, and find common ground for constructive action.

When students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other community members talk and listen to each other, they gain a deeper understanding of the challenges facing education and how to meet them.

A Visioning Process for Designing Responsive Schools is a guide for enabling a constructive dialogue essential to the future of schools and communities.

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Benefits of Community Participation

Inadequate school facility planning carries fiscal, human, and academic costs. Whether a school building is old or new, problems in design can take a devastating toll.

Schools that lack ventilation can make students drowsy or tempers flare. Open classrooms with noise and visual distractions can distract attention from the best-prepared lesson plans. Congested hallways can needlessly fuel student and staff hostilities. Drab interiors, poor lighting and the lack of pleasant social gathering spots make school less-than-inviting as a place to work and learn.

On the other hand, a strong facility planning process can reap benefits beyond a pleasant environment. School and community pride as well as faculty morale are raised when the facility planning process involves the right questions, the right stakeholders, and a clear sense of purpose.

Stakeholders Views

School facility planning amounts to more than simply ensuring safety of bus drop-off points and student locker sites, though obviously these matters are important. Instead, school leaders should set their sights on what it takes to build a "responsive" school rather than a building or campus that simply warehouses children and faculty. Building a responsive school requires more than hiring an experienced school architect (Sanoff, 1994).

Building a responsive school requires that those who actually dwell in the space be part of the planning process–be they students, faculty, or community members. Not involving everyone can cripple the outcome for years to come.

At a middle school, faculty who had not been fully included in discussions about planning still resented it 10 years down the road–and that fact undermined moral. The same school found that though it wanted to build community spirit, quite the opposite occurred because of a lack of an inclusive planning process.

Teen-agers at one modern high school were asked where they went to be alone. A majority responded that they go to the toilet, because they contended, there were "few places where you can be by yourself," making it difficult to "concentrate on what you are doing."

Performance Link

For decades, educational leaders discussed the components of a successful educational program, yet they have regarded the physical setting as an institutional backdrop receiving scant attention. Widespread misconceptions reinforce the view that the quality of the school building has no impact on academic performance. Consequently, a gap exists between the educators' view of improving quality and the process of planning schools. Responsive school buildings ought to be an expression of the fact that exploration and

discovery are important parts of obtaining knowledge. Current learning styles and teaching methods suggest the need for a new form of learning environment characterized by different activity settings and small-group activities. To obtain and maintain educational quality, however, requires changes in the facility planning process.

Considering the billions of dollars needed to repair the nations' frail and aging buildings, an opportunity to make changes in the school planning process can improve student achievement. In spite of a body of research that clearly links school building conditions to student performance, school leaders and their governing boards have paid little attention to the significance of such statistics.

Perhaps this neglect stems from the lack of suggested policies or procedures contained in the research or the lack of case studies related to the performance of school buildings from the user's viewpoint. Historically, this lack of systematic feedback resulted in the repetition of many standardized school buildings. Even today, new teaching methods have not influenced the physical nature of the classroom.

Outmoded educational specifications and standards are responsible for malfunctions and dissatisfaction with most school buildings. The use of standardized solutions guided by state and local regulations, no longer is acceptable, in light of the variety of new learning methods that demand different spatial requirements. School leaders need an evaluation system capable of sensing evolving needs.

AS USERS OF THE SCHOOL BUILDING, TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, STUDENTS, AND PARENTS, WOULD BE THE BEST EVALUATORS OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.

They should participate in the assessment. An evaluation system would be the basis for making physical improvements to school buildings since evaluation is a method of identifying needs. Assessing classroom environments can begin by questioning students and teachers about how they perceive and use the environment.

A study by Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1988), found that student attitudes about education directly reflect their learning environment. Activities within schools have educational and social aspects, yet quality in both of these is important for the operation, and development of schools.

Not only do teaching spaces serve to deliver the curriculum; they are also places where students spend time, and these too should receive attention. Social areas in the school are important to create an overall atmosphere that students can identify with and feel ownership of the environment where they study and play.

To assess the social function of a classroom, for example, a rating scale can be devised using descriptive statements that students classify into categories to detail the actual and ideal classroom. The statements refer to student needs and performance where they consider such factors as privacy, personal space, personalization, social grouping and participation. In a research study in California, students in open and traditional elementary school classrooms described their actual and ideal profiles of school. Students from the traditional school described their ideal classroom as one that would provide them with "lots of comfortable places," and as a place with "lots of interesting things to do." They also preferred not to spend the entire day at their desks.

Open-classroom students described their actual environment as one containing variety, with "lots of comfortable places." They also pointed to the existence of a few places "where you can be by yourself" at times they needed to concentrate. Teachers and administrators can gain useful information about classroom performance in response to their educational goals by using such an assessment method.

Parents Views

Educators are beginning to realize that without the support and engagement of parents and community leaders at the local level, any attempts at improving the public schools will ultimately be ineffective.

Engagement is when parents and community members collaborate in pursuing their own values and visions for their children's future. Parent engagement is more than volunteering their time for school activities. They initiate action, collaborating with educators to implement ideas for reform. Schools provide the place where people of different backgrounds interact with one another, to listen, to share concerns, to debate and deliberate. Parents and community members can initiate conversations that go beyond the discussion of surface problems and complaints. Through these conversations, people develop the trust and consensus needed for action (Cortes, 1995).

Fundamental to the issue of education reform is where principals learn to see themselves not as compliance officers, but as leaders of a team; teachers learn how to negotiate rules and regulations and can contribute their creative ideas to the classroom; and parents learn how to be equal decision-makers at the table with teachers, principals, and district officials. They are no longer peripheral to the changes taking place in their public schools; they have become the leaders of education reform in their communities.

In a recent survey, middle grade parents were asked to identify the important attributes for a school to be considered inviting and friendly for parents and students. One of the common themes among the choices for an inviting school is appearance, which includes maintenance, wall colors, plants, wayfinding clarity as well as the display of

student work. Parents were also asked to identify classroom features inviting to their child. The items they identified were temperature control, designated student storage, learning centers, wall colors, and student work on walls. Parent's perceptions about environmental attributes fostering improved student behavior and performance stressed the use of color and light. As school buildings and classrooms become more welcoming parent volunteerism will change and increase from attending periodic PTA meetings to active participation. Other research has shown that parent involvement in schools leads to improved student achievement, reduced absenteeism, decreased delinquency, and reduced drop-outs.

Wider Input

In education, as in other institutional systems, decisions about school facilities tend to be made by a few people who are not direct building users, often ignoring the direct involvement of teachers and students. Involving a building committee alone does not always solve the problem of gaining schoolwide support for the project once the design work is completed. Only a process that allows for face-to-face contact between users and those who influence the decisions can result in a sense of ownership in the process and project.

Personal contact between school leaders, teachers, staff, and students in an organized school planning process can result in considerable savings in time and money. Basically, it requires asking simple questions of who, what, where, how, and when. Like the manager of a professional sports club, planning a participation program requires thinking about goals and objectives, about options and plays, resources and timing, strategies and performances. And like sports, planning for a successful participation program involves a great deal of thought and analysis prior to the first public performance.

Improved Ownership

Arguments persist that a participatory process requires more of an architect's time that consequently would result in higher costs. Nothing could be further from the truth. Actually, direct participation requires less time than conventional methods normally used by architects. Involving all participants in a planning workshop is more efficient than relying on information gathered in a piecemeal fashion.

Carolyn Gaston, principal of the New Futures School in Albuquerque, N.M., reported that the participatory process used in developing her new school helped to enhance the self-esteem of the students and a sense of ownership in the school. Gaston related a story of how one student accidentally squirted ketchup on the cafeteria wall. The girl immediately got a cleaning rag from the cafeteria staff and cleaned the wall without any prompting. "You would be hard pressed to see that occur at any school, anywhere," reported Gaston, smiling proudly.

In the Davidson Elementary School project in Charlotte, N.C.,

designed by the Adams Group Architects, interviews with teachers during the design phase revealed discrepancies between their requirements and the educational specifications, such as the location of teachers' workrooms, location of counselor's office, and general requirements for proximity between academic and administrative areas. During a walk-through evaluation of their existing two-story building, teachers pointed to many negative features--noisy corridors, desks in the corridors for tutoring, and play areas separated by parking. The interviews and walk-through also identified features of the building that were valued, while revealing the aspirations of the primary users for the new building. Students at one school noted their desires in a "wish poem," that consisted of statements beginning with the phrase "I wish my school___." Their wishes included a variety of features, such as bright colors, daylight, and places for social gathering.

NEIGHBORS —M

Kids get user-friendly school

Davidson school designed with kids in mind

Behavior Changes

The Adams Group architects confronted a unique challenge in designing a major renovation for the First Ward Elementary School, the oldest in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg, N.C., district. Initially, they were dealing with people unaccustomed to making design decisions. And because of funding deadlines, a final plan and projected construction costs had to be prepared in less than six weeks. After several intense planning workshops, the parents and staff had completely redesigned the campus. Participants went through a goal-setting process where the outcomes were learning activities that supported each goal. Teachers working in small groups pinned photographs of different learning activities, supplied by the architect, to a campus plan and explained the reason for their choices (Sanoff, 1994).

The information from the sessions generated points of consensus as well as points of conflict. Areas of conflict included the location of different functions. Alternative plans and models were prepared for discussion with the teachers, who were asked to record their likes and dislikes on a visual rating scale. Difficult decisions and painful compromises had to be made, but the open process resulted in no losers, only winners-- a natural by-product of creative collaboration.

An assessment of the effectiveness of community participation in the First Ward school's renovation process revealed changes in the attitudes and behavior of students and staff. Principal Pat Holleman indicated the most important change that resulted from the participatory

process was the "closeness of the staff." Positive, marked changes were also noted in the spirit of the students. Attendance improved and standardized test scores went up 10 points in three years.

Other useful assessment techniques were applied in the expansion of the Broughton High School campus in Raleigh, N.C. Diagramming user flow patterns was a revelation to the students, faculty, and staff who were not aware that space planning could minimize many existing conflicts. Real-time studies disclose how teachers, students and staff use the campus environment. By stationing several observers at various locations on campus, people's movements were recorded at specific time intervals and transcribed onto a series of maps that described daily traffic patterns, congestion peaks and lows, and points of conflict. Students' map drawings of the campus to show which street and building features are recognized and considered important and ought to be considered when proposing modifications to the existing facility. For the students, the original historic building adorned with a clock tower gave the school its meaning, a factor that influenced the architects' planning.

Participation of the buildings' users can occur during several stages of the school planning process. Each stage requires the direct involvement of teachers and students in responding to open-ended questions and in discussing the performance of spaces for learning. Initially, an evaluation of present facilities can incorporate the knowledge and experience of students, staff, and teachers. This information can be integrated into the pre-design or programming stage where building users set goals and priorities. An evaluation can begin with interviews followed by a walk-through evaluation of the existing facility.

Although some efforts have been made to assess the classroom environment, most studies have stressed features such as lighting, temperature, acoustics, and floor-space per child. School boards tend to focus on cost-per-square-foot as an objective measure. How teachers and students perceive and use the classroom is a missing factor.

Considerable information related to technical performance of school buildings is available, since technical elements such as structure, safety, sanitation and ventilation can be measured by instruments. These evaluations have occurred for some time. But, social and behavioral elements of performance that focus on the extent to which educational goals link activities to the physical environment have received little attention. The accommodation of various building-use patterns, teaching methods and learning styles reflect how satisfactorily a school building performs for its users. After students and faculty have occupied a new or renovated school building, their responses are important for making future improvements, since buildings are not perfect after completion and require continuous modifications.

Participation Process

Participation in school and community issues places serious demands and responsibilities upon participants. Although people voluntarily organize to participate in community projects, the technical complexity of such projects usually requires professional assistance. In addition to the need to address technical complexity, sound design and planning principles must be incorporated in the school design process. Without guidance, community groups may respond only to situations of crisis and may not achieve the goals that originally united them. The management of participatory efforts is important.

PEOPLE WILL JOIN IF CHANGE CAN AND WILL OCCUR. PARTICIPATION CAN FUNCTION IF IT IS ACTIVE, DIRECTED AND IF THOSE WHO BECOME INVOLVED EXPERIENCE A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT. AT THE SAME TIME, A RE-EXAMINATION OF TRADITIONAL DESIGN AND PLANNING PROCEDURES IS REQUIRED TO ENSURE THAT PARTICIPATION BECOMES MORE THAN CONFIRMATION OF A PROFESSIONAL'S ORIGINAL INTENTIONS.

The goal of participation is to encourage people to learn as a result of becoming aware of an opportunity to examine new environments for learning. Learning occurs best when the process is clear, communicable, open, and encourages dialogue, debate, and collaboration. As more people learn about educational issues their decisions will have positive effects on the quality of the learning environment. Participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for institutional leaders. It only means that a dialogue is necessary between parents, teachers, students, educational administrators and public officials regarding needs and resources to meet needs (Sanoff, 2000).

The architect's role is to facilitate the school community's ability to reach decisions about the learning environment through an easily understood process. Most often this will take the form of making people aware of environmental alternatives. This role also includes helping people develop their resources in ways that will benefit themselves and others. Facilitation is a means of bringing people together to determine what they wish to do and helping them find ways in deciding how to do it. A facilitator should make everyone feel included in what is going on and that what each person has to say is being listened to by the group. Facilitation can also include the use of a variety of techniques whereby people not professionally trained can organize themselves to create a change in the environment. If people are to discover the principle of quality for themselves, they are more likely to do so in small groups. Significant changes in people's behavior will occur if the persons expected to change participate in deciding what the change shall be and how it shall be made.

Good planning for community participation requires careful analysis. Although it is critical to examine goals and objectives in planning for participation, there are various techniques that are available, each of

which performs different functions. In the last several decades, there have been numerous efforts to accumulate knowledge about various participation techniques, as well as the function that these techniques perform. Community surveys, review boards, advisory boards, task forces, neighborhood and community meetings, public hearings, public information programs, interactive cable TV, have all been used with varying degrees of success, depending on the effectiveness of the participation plan. Because community participation is a complex concept, it requires considerable thought to prepare an effective participation program.

Strategic Planning

STRATEGIC PLANNING IS AN ORGANIZED EFFORT TO PRODUCE DECISIONS AND ACTIONS THAT SHAPE AND GUIDE WHAT A COMMUNITY IS, WHAT IT DOES, AND WHY IT DOES IT.

Strategy is the act of mobilizing resources towards goals. It includes setting goals and priorities, identifying issues and constituencies, developing an organization, taking actions and evaluating results. Strategic planning requires information gathering, an exploration of alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions. It can facilitate communication and participation, accommodate divergent interests and values, and foster orderly decision making and successful implementation.

A strategic plan is a method of developing strategies and action plans necessary to identify and resolve issues. The challenge in creating a plan is to be specific enough to be able to monitor progress over time. To be usable, a strategic plan should have built-in flexibility to allow for revisions to occur, as new opportunities become apparent. Strategic planning is action oriented, considers a range of possible futures, and focuses on the implications of present decisions and actions in relation to that range.

The development of a strategic plan requires the creation of a vision statement to provide suitable guidance and motivation for the ensuing process. The vision should emphasize purposes and arrived at through group sessions in order to establish a common reference point for the broad objectives of the community. It outlines the key areas of concern within the community and will help people make decisions that support that vision.

The foundation for a strategic plan, often referred to as environmental assessment, considers needs, priorities, issues and opportunities. Environmental assessment, or post-occupancy evaluation (POE) is the practice of using methods such as surveys, questionnaires, observation's of people's behavior, and focus groups to discover exactly what makes the educational environment work well for its users. A POE is a procedure that involves users in their own assessment of

their educational environment. POEs can be effective in correcting environmental errors by examining school environments in use, or in preventing potential errors through the use of survey results in a building projects' programming stage. School environment assessments have also helped to persuade clients to choose design alternatives that they might not otherwise have considered.

Goal Setting

The results of a school environment assessment can serve as a starting point for the identification of goals. A goal is an end toward which an effort or direction is specified. In this sense a goal reflects an underlying value that is sought after and is not an object to be achieved. Goal setting can be seen as the guiding process necessary for successful school design.

Goals identify what should be accomplished through the plan. Therefore, it is the participants in the planning process who are responsible for shaping goals over the course of the project. Goals begin as open-ended ideas derived from knowledge of community needs. Whereas a goal is the desired general result, an objective is the desired specific result. Objectives should respond to each goal by defining a direction. They are definable and measurable tasks that support the accomplishment of goals. Twelve reasons for setting goals:

1. GOAL SETTING PROVIDES A SOUND BASIS FOR PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION.
2. GOAL SETTING CLARIFIES PROBLEMS.
3. PLANNING BASED ON GOALS ELICITS COMMUNITY SUPPORT.
4. GOAL SETTING LEADS TO POSITIVE ACTION.
5. GOAL SETTING LEADS TO CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING.
6. GOALS ARE BASED ON THE POTENTIAL OF A COMMUNITY.
7. PLANS BASED ON GOALS CAN BE EVALUATED AND CONSCIOUSLY CHANGED.
8. GOAL SETTING PROMOTES HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT.
9. GOAL SETTING IDENTIFIES THE COMMUNITY-WIDE NEEDS AND VALUES OF MINORITIES AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS.
10. GOAL SETTING HAS LONG-TERM EDUCATIONAL VALUE FOR THE PARTICIPANTS.
11. GOAL SETTING IS A GOOD INVESTMENT.
12. PARTICIPATORY GOAL SETTING DEMONSTRATES GOOD FAITH ON THE PART OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.

The primary inputs to goal setting are the collective knowledge, skills, abilities, and experiences of participants in the process. Although most processes are iterative, there are three stages of development integral to goal setting that require examination. Goal identification, the first stage, requires an awareness of the problem and a willingness to confront controversial issues. Goal clarification is the attempt to understand and describe feelings and emotions that may be explicit or unexpressed and implicit. Identifying goal priorities is a process of rank ordering according to a certain criterion. The sum of goal identification, goal clarification, and establishing goal priorities comprises what is commonly known as goal setting.

Goal setting entails documentation and analysis. It also entails people—local informants, a community of clients, all of whom have their own social, political and economic agendas. Goal setting involves collecting stories and identifying common themes that bind people together. Local people can provide knowledge about function, values, history and structure of community institutions. Story gathering, or qualitative research, is an approach whereby people are treated as informants, not as subjects. They are encouraged to tell what has happened to them as a way of explaining how things work, not just what things are. Goal setting results in a mutual understanding of interests and, subsequently, of interpretation of issues.

Goals may be stated in a variety of ways. Jones (1990), suggests the PARK categories be used to organize goal statements:

- **P**RESERVE (what we have now that is positive)
- **A**DD (what we do not have that is positive)
- **R**EMOVE (what we have that is negative)
- **K**EEP out (what we do not have that is negative)

A goal statement should contain one major thought, but not specify how it will be met (that comes later when strategies are identified for accomplishing goals). Statements should begin with an action word such as *develop, provide, maintain, reduce, continue, increase* or *upgrade*. Equally important as writing clear goals is making sure they represent stakeholders' views.

Strategies further clarify the methods required to reach a goal. There may be a variety of strategies required to reach a goal. Action steps advance those strategies further by specifying activities that contribute to their achievement. An action plan defines what action will be taken, who is responsible for getting it accomplished, and when the action plan should be complete. An action plan is expressed as follows:

What - A document that defines the actions to be taken, the person(s) responsible, and the time frame for completion.

Why - To define roles and responsibilities and provide a tool for tracking implementation.

How - Define actions; gain commitments; agree on deadlines.

Although participants in the strategic planning process are amenable to supporting the actions required, a sense of ownership and accountability for all enabling actions will effect successful implementation.

Several conditions need to be satisfied for a strategic planning process to be effective. They are:

- THERE MUST BE A COMPELLING REASON TO UNDERTAKE A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS.
- KEY DECISION-MAKERS MUST SEE SOME IMPORTANT BENEFITS FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING OR THEY WILL NOT BE ACTIVE SUPPORTERS AND PARTICIPANTS.
- THE PROCESS MUST BE SUPPORTED BY IMPORTANT AND POWERFUL LEADERS AND DECISION-MAKERS.
- THERE MUST BE A PROCESS ADVOCATE; A PERSON WHO BELIEVES IN STRATEGIC PLANNING AND ASSUMES THE ROLE OF FACILITATING THE THINKING, DECIDING, AND ACTING OF KEY DECISION-MAKERS.
- THE PROCESS MUST BE TAILORED TO THE COMMUNITY SITUATION.
- KEY DECISION-MAKERS TALK WITH ONE ANOTHER ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE.
- RESOURCES NEEDED ARE THE ATTENTION AND COMMITMENT FROM KEY DECISION-MAKERS.

Visioning or Long Term Planning

Visioning is a process that seeks to create living, useful guides for actions intended to position the school community for the future. A community group is ready for a visioning process when there is some dissatisfaction with the present situation, when there is a sense that they must pursue a different future than one suggested by the present approach. While school administrators do try to solicit teachers' and parents' views and ideas, it is usually through a building committee or to respond to a nearly finished product. Visioning is an entirely different approach. Participants in a visioning process are asked to contribute ideas at the beginning, before experts and administrators narrow the range of options. Visioning reinvigorates citizenship in communities where it is used.

A visioning process is usually the central element in an organizations strategic plan. A visioning process within a school or a school district, is usually initiated by the leadership. Prior to conducting a visioning process detailed information is needed about the organizational structure, as well as the forces likely to have an impact on the school or the school system. Participants are asked to think about how the school community should be and find ways to identify, strengthen and work toward a community vision. Such information helps the visioning participants understand the context and constraints under which they are operating. Participants are asked how they would like their school environment to be in 10 years or longer, and to try to put that vision into words or images. It is effective to start the process with a large group informally brainstorming what should be included in the community vision. Then, breaking into small working groups of between five and seven, participants should discus the ideas and present them to the larger group. Once participants present their views, common themes are identified and strategies are developed to move the community in the direction of the vision. Although specialists may carry out specific policies and recommendations, citizens remain responsible for the framework within which decisions are made. The shared vision belongs to the group rather than to any one individual.

Community school visioning projects are conducted by parents, teachers, administrators, and school board members, often referred to as stakeholders, who care about the future of their schools. The stakeholders in successful visioning processes represent the school community's diversity. As the planning group for the visioning process, they set goals and develop the action plan and implementation strategies.

Strategies further clarify the methods required to reach a goal. Action steps advance those strategies further by specifying activities that contribute to their achievement. Action steps are expressed as who (responsibility) does what (action) by when (timeline).

There may be a variety of objectives and strategies to support a single goal. Without this degree of detail, the various organizations responsible for action will lose track of their tasks and objectives are unlikely to be met. The ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET will help to keep track of goals, objectives, strategies, and action steps.

ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

Goal:

Objective:

Strategy:

ACTION STEP	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMELINE
•		
•		
•		
•		
•		

Charrette Process: Generating Design Ideas

The word *charrette* derives from the French translation of "chariot" or "cart," reminiscent of the one used to collect architectural designs produced at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century. Often, the students would be drawing while the carts were moving, giving the word the meaning of a last-minute burst of activity to meet the deadline. The charrette process, as used today, refers to the rapid pace at which designs were finalized and the energy that ensued from that production. But, a newer component, consensus, has emerged as a guiding principle throughout the charrette.

The contemporary charrette operates simultaneously as a product and a process. The typical educational charrette maximizes participation over a three-to-five-day framework. In addition to a structured schedule and an open process for participation, the charrette includes three defined mechanisms. The first, idea generation, requires a knowledge transfer among all affected parties. The second charrette mechanism, decision making, requires a discourse about the ideas presented. Finally, problem solving provides recommendations and proposals as process outcomes.

The Charrette Process has proven to be a successful goal-setting technique, a collaborative exchange and an interdisciplinary problem-solving approach. It is a successful participatory design strategy when applied to specific goal-oriented objectives of a clearly defined problem. The charrette becomes less of a technique and more a collaborative planning process when used in conjunction with other participatory techniques within a defined program. In general, the two main objectives of the charrette are as follows:

1. To gain the unified support of a representative cross section of stakeholders who are committed to implementing the proposed solutions.

2. To get the commitment of the power structure to secure the necessary resources in order to affect the changes.

The following are the basic strategies of a charrette:

- Perception of a common goal or sense of urgency
- Involvement of all factions of the school community
- Full citizen participation (with those not experiencing the problem)
- Maintaining a sense of individual contribution to the total process
- Resolution of conflict and focusing on community tasks

First of all, the community must have a sense of urgency about educational issues in order for a *charrette* to become an effective mechanism for change. It is important to get various representatives of the school community to work together toward the common goals of the charrette. This is more likely to occur if the individuals within these groups feel a sense of personal contribution to the total process. If people do not perceive that they can satisfy their own goals, they will not participate. It is particularly important for the steering committee to know which faction of the community has the greatest interest in solving the problems, because its members are the people most likely to formulate the solutions. Creating a dialogue within working groups will allow people who are not experiencing the problem to learn from those who are. The charrette manager must maintain control of the group dynamics: get the groups to work and if necessary, be able to diffuse any disruptive behavior.

- AN IDENTIFIABLE PROBLEM
- USER PARTICIPATION
- INVOLVEMENT OF PROFESSIONALS FROM WITHIN AND FROM OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY.
- THE ADOPTION OF SHORT AND LONG TERM GOALS
- A COMMITMENT TO PUT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHARRETTE INTO ACTION

In the charrette, the process requires an accelerated rate of participation and an unveiling of all agendas. With all parties at the table, the dialogue evolves into decision making. An individual's interests are not ignored; rather, they are considered in respect to others and are modified accordingly.

The role of modification during the process is important to identify at the outset of the charrette. The eventual goal is local consensus. The extent to which consensus demands modification is something that cannot be ignored. In his discussion of consensus decision-making, Avery (1981) comments, "What occurs in consensus is not compromise, i.e. giving up of something you want, a something that is assumed to be fixed and unchangeable, but a profoundly if subtly different event: reformulation, in which what you started out wanting itself changes. You do not lose something of this fixed position, you change, see something better, improve your benefits in the contexts of the group exchange, the new information, the longer better vision generated."

A charrette consensus is seen as an agent of self-awareness and knowledge through action or learning by doing. On the other hand,

compromise is seen as a loss. The perception of this "loss" needs to be adjusted so that the consensus process is seen more as an evolving modification or reformulation of ideas.

Strategy Selection

A group process for identifying strategic issues is referred to as the "SNOW CARD" (Greenblat & Duke, 1981), or "SNOWBALL" (Nutt & Backoff, 1987) technique that combines brainstorming—which produces a long list of possible answers to a specific question—with a synthesizing step, in which answers are grouped into categories according to common themes. Each of the individual answers is written onto a 5-by-7 inch index card called a "snow card"; the individual cards then are fastened to a wall according to common themes, producing several "snowballs" of cards.

Guidelines for using the snow card technique are:

- SELECT A FACILITATOR TO GUIDE THE PROCESS.
- FORM THE GROUP(S) THAT WILL USE THE TECHNIQUE. THE GROUP SIZE CAN VARY BETWEEN 5 TO 12 MEMBERS. SEVERAL GROUPS CAN BE FORMED IF LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE WISH TO PARTICIPATE.
- PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BE SEATED AROUND A TABLE WHERE THE INDEX CARDS CAN BE READ CLEARLY BY ALL MEMBERS.
- PARTICIPANTS SHOULD FOCUS ON A SINGLE PROBLEM OR ISSUE.
- PARTICIPANTS SHOULD SILENTLY BRAINSTORM AS MANY IDEAS AS POSSIBLE, AND SELECT FIVE BEST ITEMS TO BE TRANSCRIBED ONTO SEPARATE INDEX CARDS.
- CARDS ARE COLLECTED BY THE FACILITATOR, FASTENED TO THE WALL, CLUSTERED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS, THEN DISCUSSED UNTIL AGREEMENT IS REACHED ABOUT CATEGORIES AND THEIR CONTENTS.

Strategic planning cycles typically begin with an appreciation and articulation of a perceived necessity and threat. Opportunity also can capture people's attention, although it seems to do so less frequently than necessity and threat. People and organizations are attached to ideas. In fact, organizations, agencies, and institutions are all organized around ideas, many of which are outmoded. Strategic planning, if it is to be effective, is often focused on replacing the way things are being done now with other ways. Schon (1971) argues it is more important to manage ideas, rather than people or structures, because ideas are the rallying points of collective action.

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